

In response to recent high-profile police use of force incidents in Baton Rouge and Falcon Heights Minnesota as well as Police Officer Line of Duty Deaths in Dallas and Baton Rouge our department hosted a community meeting to discuss police and public relations on Thursday, July 21st. The meeting lasted for over two hours with over 200 community members in attendance. Our goal at the meeting was to present information about the training and programs that our department engages in and then to actively listen to the concerns of our community. We documented some common themes the community brought up from this meeting and they are listed below.

- Police and community members need to know and engage each other better this would make a big difference in Police/community relationships. Here are a few examples that were presented.
 - Officers need to get out of their cars and talk with the public
 - Officers need to understand the power of a smile
 - Officers need to engage in one on one conversations to just say “HI”
- Several speakers talked about issues regarding homelessness. They encouraged the police department to:
 - Recognize the homeless as people and reach out to them
 - The entire community is needed to work together to reduce homelessness
 - Conduct outreach to the homeless community
- Community members should attend the Kent Police Community Academy to learn more and create an understanding about the various units at the police department
- Everyone should have more conversations – we would find that we are not as different as people would make us believe.
 - That would include having the “tough conversation” where people would be told information that they might not want to hear. These conversations need to be respectful and both sides need to listen to learn where the other side is coming from.
- As a community, we need to reduce/de-emphasize our differences and focus on similarities
- We must break down negative stereotypes and create positive ones.
- Several speakers talked about making youth a priority, mentoring them. Officers need to get to know the young people in our community.
- Police / Community Liaisons are important
- Several speakers stated that we need more police officers

This meeting was an outstanding way for the police department to learn what is important to our community. We will be working on these common themes to build a stronger Police/Community relationship. It should be noted that the Kent Police Department have been working on these themes for the last couple of years.

- We have mandated training classes for our personnel that included Crisis Intervention, Respect, Blue Courage, Emotional Survival, Multidimensional Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Fair and Impartial Policing. These classes have taught our officers about respect, bias, and ethics.
- Every member of our Command Staff is working with different diverse groups within the City of Kent to include a Commander working with the homeless and another working with the youth.
- We work with our youth on a daily basis.
 - We have 2 School Resource Officers that work in our high schools and middle schools
 - We have a training cadre of officers that teach the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program.
 - Our day shift and early swing officers are each assigned a grade school where they make contact each week to talk with the students and staff
 - We teach a Police Science class at Kent Meridian High School
- We encourage all of our officers to make personal contacts with our community each day when they are driving around the neighborhoods and we encourage face to face reporting rather than taking calls by phone or online.
- We will be having a fall community academy starting on September 7. A link for registration will be on our web page shortly.
- We have quarterly meetings with the community and Coffee with the Chief to make one on one contact.

We thank you for the support you have given to the Kent Police Department over the years and we strive to follow our vision statement which is "to be the most respected and effective police department in the region."